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STUDY OF ART IN THE UNIVERSITY*

As practical teaching in the fine arts has nothing to do with general education, even in its highest sense, it may be that such teaching has no place in a university. It is to that question that the following remarks are addressed:

The fine arts with which the immediate inquiry lies are those of form and color—those which are generally called the arts of design. . . . Those arts which are especially fine arts are all manual arts in the strict sense of the word. They are the result of the skilled hand of man inspired directly by the mind which has, by nature and by training, a peculiar ability not noticeable in the ordinary pursuits of mankind. In saying this I am presuming, of course, a certain degree of merit in the artistic production.

The work of the sculptor is most commonly, in modern times at least, the putting into shape of soft and plastic material—the process called modeling. From the model, copies in hard and durable material are made, and these copies are open to revision and improvement by the hand of the original artist. Sculpture includes also carving directly by the hand of the artist in wood, ivory, or stone; and in preparation for such work, which cannot easily be altered, models in soft material are continually made. All this is the work of the naturally delicate and artistically trained hand of the artist, inspired by his gifted and educated senses and creative power.

The art of the painter is more complex than that of the sculptor, but it may be defined in a general way as the art of representing on the flat surface any or all of the things seen in external nature, but in such a way that the natural object is seen in new lights, and perhaps with a profounder insight, and that the resulting effect is attractive in a very high degree. . . .

Whatever is the ultimate object, the means are the same. Those means are all reducible to the touch of the skilled hand guiding such instruments as experience has proved useful for its immediate purposes. The sculptor has wooden scrapers of different forms, and iron tools, some of which are of the man's own devising; he uses wax prepared in various ways; clay, which has to be kept wet and is of infinite annoyance to the artist and his assistant; he guides himself by drawing in chalk on a blackboard or a great sheet of paper; he sets up iron forms to support the heavy masses of his wet clay; he uses a complicated machine to enable the workmen to copy in marble the perfected model, and that perfected model, as given to the work-

* Portion of a letter written to President Butler apropos of the establishment of a department of Fine Arts at Columbia University.

men, will probably be a plaster cast from his clay original, because such a cast will keep its shape forever if not injured by direct blows.

All of this is the mere external and visible side of the artist's work. The essential thing in his work is that touch of the hand upon the material, hard or soft, which touch it is impossible to describe, and equally impossible to teach to another, except by long and slow personal precept and example. In short, the art of sculpture is a manual art, and is to be handed down from master to pupil only as any other manual art of great delicacy may be handed down. . . .

The manual art of painting is still more complex. No one artist has ever been able to carry on at the same time all the various branches of this elaborate art, for it includes every kind of representation and of expression of thought on a flat surface. It includes drawing with the hard point and with the soft crumbling stick of charcoal, and this drawing to include under one general term processes so different as the setting down of an arbitrary bounding line (the outline), carried more or less far into detail, according to the ideas of the artist at work, and equally the representation of light and shade, that is to say, of masses of light and dark so arranged, so contrasted, and so graded that they explain and in a way represent certain actually existing objects in nature—all this to produce an effect of beauty, force, or significance which appeals directly to the eye and to the mind of the observer.

Drawing, moreover, includes much of the putting into place and organizing of the whole work of art. Thus, a definition has been given by most competent critics for the term "drawing," namely, the putting of each thing into its right place; that is to say, putting the strongest dark, the most brilliant light, the half lights, the point of pure red, the surface of delicately graded blue, and the like—of putting all these each into its right place for its due effect upon all the other parts of the composition. But if drawing includes so much, and is so hard to define absolutely, in like manner the word "coloring" or "color" is almost equally extensive, and almost equally ill defined. . . .

For some reason hard to explain, the artist in painting has generally preferred the expression of form on the flat surface, the most difficult thing which is given to artistically minded man to achieve—has preferred this to that which would seem to be directly offered him as his proper task, the production of strong contrasts and delicate gradations of color such as nature gives us in the scenery of mountains and sky.

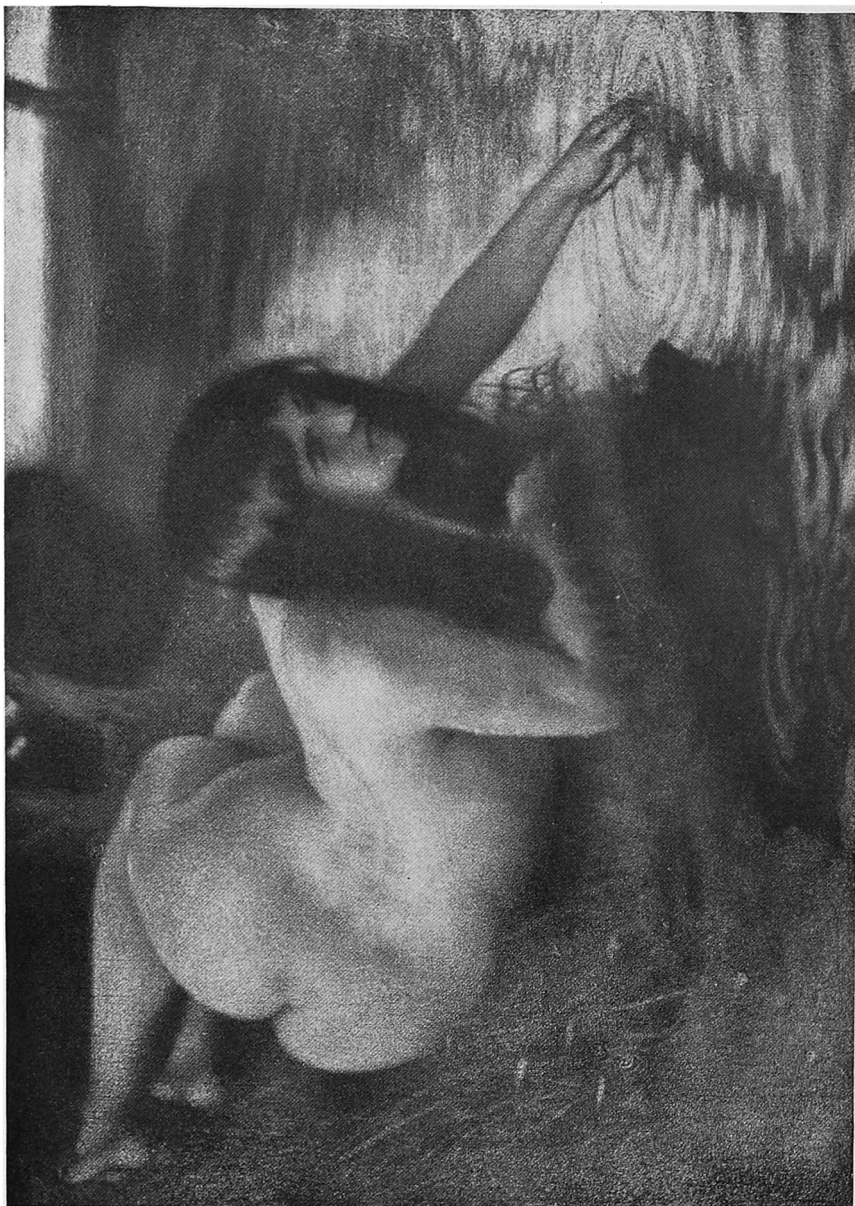
Still, however, the art is manual. The turn of the hand, the action of wrist and finger, by which a little of the heavy clinging oil color with which the brush is loaded, is left delicately attached to the previously laid surface of paint, henceforward modifying throughout one whole passage of the composition, delicate and inexplicable as it

is, is not more purely a refined manual operation than is the leaving of a bit of white paper in the water-color drawing, while the transparent color around it flows as it were up to the unseizable, undiscoverable edge of the white patch, so that, although the eye sees that the bit of white is there, and that beyond it there are gradations of yellow passing slowly into green, the dividing line is as imperceptible as that which separates a distant mountain at sunset, flushed with pink, from the sky beyond it—an outline which no one can draw.

The purpose of this attempted exposition of the significance of manual art is, that I may insist upon the enormous difference between this and university education. University education has to do with all that can be taught in words, and all that is expressible in the language of words. A manual art has nothing to do with the thoughts which are expressible in words; by it thoughts are expressed wholly otherwise. It is not out of the way for a university to include a school of architecture, because architecture as practiced in modern times is not a manual art, but is a combination of an intellectual but non-artistic study with science, and with artistic traditions now embodied in books. What little skill in any manual way the architect may require he must of necessity gain outside of the university, just as he must gain also outside of the university that knowledge and instinctive sense of the business expediencies which will make him more or less successful in getting business and in doing it to the advantage of his employer. . . . In like manner, archæology belongs in a university. . . .

As taught in a university, archæology is, of course, a branch of history, and its extraordinary services to the historian are made manifest in the work now going on of slowly building up the history of the great Roman empire, a history which had been left in a hopeless state of confusion and misunderstanding by those contemporary writers whose works are all that had come down to us. In like manner, the history of fine art, a matter not in all respects the same as archæology, though of course closely connected with it, is altogether a matter for university teaching; and in immediate connection with this, in fact inseparable from it, is the matter of artistic criticism. . . . It need hardly be said that æsthetics, or the metaphysical aspect of the production of the work of art and the mental processes which lead up to it, is entirely a fit subject for university training. . . .

There is one important reason why the university should not undertake to include in its course of study other subjects than those which are expressible in the language of words, and that is the requirement which certainly exists, though it is partly lost sight of in modern times, the requirement that the student of the manual arts should begin his training at a very early age. If one could be sure that at the age of fifteen a boy had unusual gifts of artistic perception, and thoughts capable of artistic expression as well, it is then, and not



STUDY OF THE NUDE
By Max Fleischmann

later that he should be put to all-day training in the art which he would choose. Such knowledge of his native tongue and of arithmetic and other simple studies as are obtainable before the age of fifteen are all that should be asked for the commencement.

The boy should be set to work upon his task in the morning, and kept at it, easily, quietly, without haste and without worry, all day long and every day, until the master finds that his apprentice has grown up to his own stature. If, then, the university should wish to teach this artist in his later life—when the young man, already a master in his art, feels the need of more literary cultivation than he has had hitherto—then, to his mature mind and his faculties of perception and acquisition trained, though not in the literary way, the university may offer literature, language, science, what you will. It would be a noble thing to have such a course of what may be called collegiate studies for the grown man. On the other hand, nothing but injury to the artist's career can come from anything like a serious attempt to teach him any of those things which are contained in the language of words during the years which he should devote exclusively to his artistic training.

The conclusion is, that the university may and should have a course of study in the theory and criticism of fine art, including archæology in the widest sense, including, that is to say, the study of the recent past as well as of the remote antiquity, and the careful noting of new views and recently matured lines of criticism, as well as the absolute discoveries of hitherto unknown documents or works of art.

RUSSELL STURGIS.



THE ART OF JOHN J. ENNEKING

One recalls the melancholy brooding of Andrea del Sarto, called "the Faultless Painter," from his perfection of technic, but who was deficient in impulse and soul, when he says in the poem of Browning, "All is silver-gray, placid, and perfect with my art." Citing some of his fellow-painters who strove and agonized to do what came with such facility to him, he adds, "But all the play, the insight, and the stretch—out of me! out of me!" It is this play, this insight, this stretch of imagination and feeling, that makes true art, of which the technicalities are but the instruments of expression; and in the work of John J. Enneking of Boston, one of the most individual of American painters, and withal one of the most developed and rounded of personalities, one sees an admirable illustration of these qualities.

The word "developed" is after all not quite the fitting one, for there is such a spontaneity and inevitableness about Mr. Enneking's nature that one is all the time conscious of original impulse, of innate